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DOOM 2044™

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DICTATOR FOR LIFE

I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO SEE THIS, DOOM.

I DOWNLOADED AND SURFED THROUGH SOME STRAY FILES FROM THIS ALCHEMAX WISE GUY, JORDAN BOONE. WAS HE EVER THEIR GOLDEN BOY! HE GOT A PRACTICALLY *UNLIMITED* BUDGET TO WORK UP SOMETHING CALLED *VIRTUAL UNREALITY.*

BEFORE HE *PARTED COMPANY* WITH 'EM, HE MUST'VE TRIED TO *LINK* THAT PROJECT WITH *CYBERSPACE!*

"VIRTUAL *UN*REALITY" "CYBERSPACE."

THE WORLD IS NOT ONLY STRANGER THAN WE KNOW, IT IS STRANGER THAN WE *CAN* KNOW.

ALL TO THE GOOD. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, AND I EXPLOIT *IGNORANCE.*

WHAT ANOMALY LED YOU TO BELIEVE SOMETHING CHANGED IN CYBERSPACE?

HIM, I TAKE IT?

WHO IS HE? WHO WOULD CHOOSE TO REPRESENT HIMSELF AS A RAGGED BEGGAR IF THEY COULD BE ANYTHING THEY WANTED ON THE NET?

THAT'S NOT A CHOICE, IT'S A LITERAL REPRESENTATION. HE'S WHAT HE SEEMS TO BE -- A MAN FROM BEFORE THE DARK AGES... OR AT LEAST, HIS *KEEV.*

QUESTION IS, DOOM, HOW COULD A FEEB LIKE THAT ACCESS THIS PLACE? NOT MANY SILICON CHIPS IN A BALE OF HAY.

DON'T SPEAK SO SOON. THE MARKS ON HIS FACE INDICATE THAT IN HIS CULTURE... HE WAS A *PRINCE.* USE YOUR GLOBAL ACCESS TO *ADDRESS* HIM.

YOU... THE ONE CALLED "*DOOM*"?

YOU ARE THE ONE I HAVE COME SO FAR TO *FIND.*

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WHAT DO YOU NEED OF ME?

IT IS NOT WHAT I NEED. IT IS WHAT THE *WORLD* NEEDS FROM YOU.

DEMANDS OF YOU.

YOU BEAR AN *IRON HAND*. PERHAPS IT IS *SYMBOLIC* OF THE IRON HAND YOU *MUST* WIELD!

CRETIN! PRETENDER TO THE THRONE!

HOW *DARE* YOU SPEAK TO THIS MAN OF WHAT HE "MUST" DO! YOU ARE NOT FIT TO SHINE HIS *BOOTS*!

LET HIM SPEAK INSTEAD TO A *PEER*... *ATTILA*, GREATEST OF THE *HUNS*!

TRULY... I SEE MYSELF REFLECTED IN *YOU*!

YET, YOU DISAPPOINT!

YOU ARE THE *GREATEST* TO SIT UPON THE THRONE OF POWER, BUT YOU HAVE NEVER DONE WHAT YOU... AND *ALL* OF US... HAVE SET OUT TO DO...

...ASSUME THE *ULTIMATE*, THE *SUPREME* POWER... *EMPEROR* OF THE *WORLD!*

YOU KNOW YOU *WANT* IT.

SO YOU HAVE *NO EXCUSE*. WHAT YOU *WANT* IS *YOURS*.

YOU HAVE HAD ACCESS TO *MEANS* THAT WOULD OUTSTRIP *FAR* OUR WILDEST IMAGINATIONS!

WHAT ARE YOU *WAITING* FOR?

I SHOULD BE *FLATTERED* THAT MY REPUTATION PRECEDES ME...

...AND TRULY IT *HAS* PRECEDED ME... SOME SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS TO *YOUR* TIME, ATTILA.

SUCH AN ASCENT TO POWER, I'VE FOUND, REQUIRED MY WILL AGAINST THE MAJORITY. WHERE WOULD I FIND THOSE WILLING TO BE GOVERNED? WHERE WOULD I FIND THE CONSENSUS TO RULE?

AGAIN YOU DISAPPOINT. *NO TRUE* MAN OF POWER EVER NEEDED A CONSENSUS...

BUT IF YOU *WISH* ONE, HERE IT *IS*...

STAN LEE PRESENTS

Long Live... King Doom the FIRST!

DOOM... CAESAR!

MY VOTE IS CAST! DOOM FOR *PRESIDENT*!

EMPEROR DOOM!

GIVE US DOOM!

WHO *SPEAKS*? WHO *MAKES* THIS MANDATE?

ERNIE COLON STORY&ART · ROD ELLERENSHAW LETTERS · MIKE THOMAS COLORS · JOEY CAVALIERI EDITOR · TOM DeFALCO KING

C'EST MOI, YOUR EMPEROR, NAPOLEON THE FIRST!

T'SING DAO, GENGHIS THE KHAN!

AND I, ALEXANDER, WHO WEPT WHEN THERE WERE *NO MORE* WORLDS TO CONQUER!

YOU DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF TEARS, WHELP.

ET TU, DOOM? WILL YOU REFUSE OUR HELP IN GAINING THE GREATEST POWER OF ALL?

COME, COME. EVEN BEHIND THAT STEEL MASK, YOUR THOUGHTS, YOUR FEELINGS ARE *BETRAYED*. YOU ARE IMPRESSED AREN'T YOU?

EVEN A BIT... *HUMBLED*?

BY WHAT? AN ASSEMBLAGE OF HISTORY'S GREATEST *LOSERS*?

LOSERS? LOSERS OF WHAT?

I HAVE A STABLE LARGER THAN LATVERIA!

IF I AM A LOSER, I HAVE LOST MORE THAN YOU HAVE GAINED IN A LIFETIME!

I DON'T THINK HE *IS* READY TO ASSUME COMMAND.

LOOK AT THE RAGTAG BAND OF FOLLOWERS! THESE ARE RESOURCES FOR AN EMPEROR?

AND WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME USE?

AN *ARMY*, DOOM.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD ONE LIKE THIS?

BRAVE, BRUTAL AND BLOODTHIRSTY...

...THE FIGHTING MEN OF A HUNDRED CENTURIES...

...FROM ROME AND CARTHAGE... MONGOLIA AND MACEDONIA, ODESSA AND OLYMPIA!

UNQUESTIONING... AND UNSTOPPABLE!

THEY ARE WITHOUT NUMBER... AND AS ONE FALLS, A SCORE MORE TAKES HIS PLACE!

WHAT DO YOU SAY, DOOM?

AH... YOUR ANSWER IS PLAIN.

NOT NEARLY AS PLAIN AS YOUR *REASON* FOR THE GENEROUS OFFER.

LET *ME* ELUCIDATE.

SHAKESPEARE SAID "THE EVIL MEN DO LIVES AFTER THEM... THE GOOD IS OFT INTERR'D WITH THEIR BONES."

EVEN THE MOST *DESPOTIC* OF LEADERS BROUGHT *SWEEPING* CHANGE TO THE REPUBLICS THEY *SUBJUGATED*.

ALTHOUGH WE WROTE HISTORY IN *BLOOD*, TOO EASILY IT WAS WIPED AWAY! WE LIVED BY THE SWORD... AND THE CHANGES WE BROUGHT DIED BY THE SAME SWORD!

NO MATTER *WHO* BUILT THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA... IT WAS DESTROYED BY VANDALS NONETHELESS...

I *MYSELF* BROUGHT A NEW WORD FOR DEFEAT INTO THE LANGUAGE... THE DAY OF THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

BUT NOW IS A CRITICAL TIDE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN IN 2099, THERE IS GREAT DISORDER UNDER HEAVEN, AND THE SITUATION IS EXCELLENT FOR A MAN LIKE DOOM.

NOW COMES THE OPPORTUNITY TO LAY DOWN LAWS AND VALUES OF... PERFECTION THAT WILL STAND FOR ALL TIME. SUCH AN UNDERTAKING MUST HAVE THE WORLD'S GREATEST CAPTAIN AT ITS HELM.

THE GREATEST?

FAR BE IT FROM ME TO *ARGUE*.

IF DESTINY BECKONS EVEN HERE IN THIS ENDLESS EXPANSE, WHO AM I TO IGNORE THE CALL?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LETTING YOURSELF IN FOR? IT'S ONE THING TO RULE THE WORLD...

...BUT "THE WORLD" IS DEFINED AS A MUCH BIGGER PLACE THAN WHEN ANY OF THESE GENTLEMEN TRIED TO CONQUER IT WITH MERE ARMIES.

THE TERRITORY OF CYBERSPACE, THE REALM OF THE MYSTIC, THE DIMENSIONS JORDAN BOONE LINKED UP TO IN VIRTUAL UNREALITY, THE NANOTECH SPHERE, TO SAY NOTHING OF SPACE...

THE *GLOBE* MAY HAVE GROWN SMALLER IN 2099... BUT THE *UNIVERSE*...

THE *UNIVERSE* INDEED, WIRE.

THE UNIVERSE CONTINUES TO EXPAND.

BETTER TO EXPAND ONE'S HORIZONS WITH IT, NO?

GENTLEMEN... WHEREVER THE ROAD HEADS... WHATEVER THE CHALLENGE...

DOOM WILL LEAD!!

"WHAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MY NEW ORDER REQUIRES...

"...IS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD ORDER BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY."

THE DESPOTS AND TINPOT DICTATORS [redacted] THE WORLD'S NATIONS HAVE [redacted] RIDE [redacted] LONG.

THEY [redacted] DONE NOTHING BUT FEED THEIR FAT COFFERS FROM THE DAY THEY FIRST HELD HIGH OFFICE.

THEY MUST BE *CLEARED*. LET THEM GET OUT OF THE WAY OF THE NEW REGIME. AS THE BIBLE SAYS, THE LAST SHALL COME [redacted] THE FIRST SHALL COME LAST.

"...FOR THE TIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'."

WHAT?

NOTHING. [redacted] OLD TUNE DUKE STRATO[redacted] USED TO BE FOND OF. NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT MYSELF.

SO WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THESE GUYS WHO USED TO BE RUNNING THE SHOW?

DO? WE *EXECUTE* THEM.

WITHOUT A TRIAL?

[redacted] TRIAL? WHY, YES, YES, OF COURSE, THERE MUST BE A TRIAL.

[redacted] EMULATING [redacted] OF [redacted] JURISPRUDENTIAL [redacted] OF ALL TIME, THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

I DON'T GROK.

"SENTENCE FIRST, VERDICT AFTERWARD."

"AND OF COURSE, HER MORE FAMOUS COMMAND.

"OFF WITH THEIR HEADS!"

BY THE WAY... YOU WILL ADDRESS [redacted] AS "EMPEROR" OR "YOUR HIGHNESS." IS THAT CLEAR?

C-CLEAR AS A SCHEMATIC, DO-- YOUR HIGHNESS.

[redacted] WHY [redacted] YOU SO [redacted] TO SEE THESE LEADERS KILLED?

CERTAINLY NOT [redacted] THEY POSE [redacted] THREAT TO YOU?

"CERTAINLY NOT" IS CORRECT.

"FIRST, WE ELIMINATE THE CRIMINAL CLASS.

"THEY WERE A BURDEN ON THE OLD SOCIETY.

"THEY WILL NOT BRING DOWN THE NEXT ONE. MY NEXT ONE!

"NEXT, THERE IS THE MILITARY, STEEPED IN TRADITION, A TRADITION THAT HAS OUTLIVED ITS USEFULNESS AND CANNOT SEE PAST ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE!"

I HAVE GIVEN MY LIFE TO THE SERVICE! I *DEMAND* A MILITARY EXECUTION! A FIRING SQUAD!

DO YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN?

"HANG HIM."

BUT, DOO-- EMPEROR DOOM... ALL THESE MEN... ALL [redacted] LIVES...

...ARE EXPENDABLE IN 2099.

WHY DO YOU FEEL FOR THEM, WIRE? WHAT GRINDING WHEELS HAVE I SET IN MOTION THAT *SOCIETY* HAS NOT?

THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FATE I OFFER THEM, AND THE ONE POLITE SOCIETY PROFFERS, IS THE *SPEED* AT WHICH IT ARRIVES.

LIKE CAESAR, LIKE NAPOLEON, LIKE HAMMURABI, I NOW PROCLAIM A NEW AND *PERFECT* UNIVERSAL SYSTEM OF LAW.

THESE JUDGES, [redacted]SE OF THEIR HUMAN NATURE, CANNOT APPROACH THE IMPARTIALITY THEY PRETEND.

JUSTICE IS NOT BLIND TO THEM; THEY SEE CLASS [redacted] RACE TOO CLEARLY.

COMPUTERS, PROGRAMMED WITH EVERY LEGAL PRECEDENT, USE THE BEST OF HUMAN REASON, WHILE AFFECTING MACHINE-LIKE PRECISION.

THEY WILL TRY CASES ON THE DATA THEY ARE FED...THAT IS, THE *MERITS* OF THE CASE.

TH[redacted] JUDGES WILL BE...SUMMARILY [redacted]

AND THE MILITARY?

HOW DO YOU KEEP THEM FROM RISING UP AGAINST YOU?

HOW DO YOU KEEP [redacted] GENERAL FROM THINKING HE CAN RUN THINGS [redacted] THAN...THE EMPEROR?

GETTING RID OF THE MILITARY? *HOW?*

BY ELIMINATING THEM *ENTIRELY!*

BY FIRST ELIMINATING *BORDERS.*

[redacted]*ERS* ARE AN EVIL. *BORDERS* ARE THE REASON [redacted] SIGN UP TO FIGHT AND DIE. [redacted] INSPIRE THE FOOLISH PRIDE OF NATIONALISM. TOO MANY HAVE DIED *PROTECTING* BORDERS!

UNDER MY REIGN, THE MAP WILL [redacted] *REDRAWN*. ALL BORDERS *ELIMINATED*. THERE WILL BE BUT *ONE* HOMELAND!

MINE!

GENTLEMEN...

...WE HAVE PLACED OUR TRUST IN THE RIGHT MAN.

WE... ALL OF US... HAVE MADE OUR *OWN* BORDERS, THROUGH TIME, *WE* DECIDED WHERE THE MARKERS WERE TO BE PLACED.

WE HAD NOT THE *MEANS* TO PLACE OUR BANNER AT *ULTIMA THULE.*

A WORLD UNITED UNDER ONE FLAG! IT CAN BE DONE! IT IS MY *WILL!*

THIS PRESENTS A BIT OF A PROBLEM...

WHAT NATION WOULD WANT TO HAVE ITS BORDERS ERASED... ITS NATIONAL IDENTITY MELDED WITH A NEIGHBOR IT PROBABLY *HATES?*

SETTLING BORDER FEUDS THAT HAVE LASTED FOR CENTURIES ISN'T GONNA HAPPEN OVERNIGHT.

THAT SO-CALLED FOOLISH NATIONAL-ISM RUNS PRETTY DEEP, YOU'LL GET RESISTANCE.

RESISTANCE? I THINK [redacted]

ONE OF OUR [redacted] APPEARS [redacted] THE HORIZON, HIS REPORT WILL CHANGE YOUR THINKING, WHELP!

AS YOU COMMAND, EMPEROR [redacted]... [redacted] SHALL IT BE!

A WORLD *PACIFIED* AT LAST... BROUGHT TO HEEL BENEATH *ONE* BANNER... SO SHALL IT BE!

[redacted] SAY WE ALL!

MY ARMY IS READY FOR ITS FINAL RIDE!

WE THIRST FOR THAT FOR WHICH WE WERE BORN!

WE THIRST FOR... BLOOD!

BEWARE, DOOM!

UNITING ALL MEN UNDER A COMMON BANNER MAY NOT [redacted] ENOUGH... IF THE HUN SPEAKS TRULY.

YOU CAN [redacted] MEN'S LOYALTIES, BUT NOT THEIR APPETITES... ESPECIALLY IF THEIR APPETITES [redacted] TO *BATTLE*... TO *WAR!*

[redacted] SO, [redacted] NO.

AT LAST, SOMETHING I CAN CONTRIBUTE... SOMETH[redacted] THIS [redacted] [redacted] WORLD NEEDS.

IF I'M GOING TO BE AN ARCHITECT OF THIS NEW WORLD ORDER, IT DESERVES FAR [redacted] IT'S GETTING FROM THE LIKES OF YOU!

WHY SHOULD ONLY THE WARRIORS OF HISTORY DECIDE THE FUTURE...

...WHEN IT NEEDS *PHILOSOPHERS!*

NEED? WHO AMONG US CAN SAY WHAT [redacted] WORLD NEEDS?

DO ANY OF US REALLY KNOW?

ALL I KNOW IS HOW MUCH I DO *NOT* KNOW.

GIVEN THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE'VE BEEN *NEEDED* THROUGH THE AGES, MANKIND COULD NOT POSSIBLY NEED PHILOSOPHY *LESS.*

THAT'S DEBATABLE. A LITTLE PHILOSOPHY INCLINETH MAN'S MIND TO ATHEISM, BUT DEPTH IN PHILOSOPHY BRINGETH MAN'S MINDS ABOUT TO RELIGION.

ON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION...

I FURTHER BELIEVE THAT--

GUYS! GUYS! CAN'T I GET A SIMPLE ANSWER HERE?

SIMPLE ANSWERS?

ISN'T THAT WHAT DOOM OFFERS?

POINT TAKEN.

LIKE ALL PHILOSOPHY STATES... IF I WANT AN ANSWER, I'VE GOT TO FIND IT MYSELF.

AND I THINK I KNOW WHERE. I JUST HOPE I CAN FIND IT...

"...SOMEWHERE IN THE CHAOS DOOM CAUSED!"

IT'S OVER!

THAT'S THE LAST OF THEM!

THEY [redacted] MARCHING AT US *TEN DEEP!* I THOUGHT THEY'D *NEVER* STOP MARCHING!

BUT ONCE THE LAST ONE DROPPED, I--

NO, IT CAN'T BE!

WE'VE SLAUGHTERED THOUSANDS OF THEM AND STILL THEY KEEP COMING!

RELOAD!

WE WILL FIGHT AND *DIE* [redacted] THIS [redacted] IF [redacted] BE!

MY FATHER AND BROTHERS *DIED* [redacted] THIS LAND... AND I TOO WILL SPILL MY BLOOD IF [redacted] BE!

WE WILL DO... WHATEVER IT TAKES...

"... FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES!"

I DID NOT FORESEE THIG!

PACIFICATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN *EMBRACED* BY NOW. THE WORLD SHOULD BE *GRATEFUL* FOR REMOVING THE TASK OF GOVERNING FROM THEIR SHOULDERS!

STILL THEY RESIST ME! WHY? WHAT HAVE THEY TO GAIN?

A FOREIGN EMOTION CREEPS UPON ME... *DOUBT.*

MY SENSE OF PURPOSE MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE SO CLOUDED!

DOOM!

WHO ADDRESSES ME SUCH? IT IS *EMPEROR DOOM* TO SUCH AS YOU.

THE *PEOPLE* WILL DECIDE HOW YOU ARE TO BE ADDRESSED.

THEY WISH ME TO BRING YOU THE NEWS...

THESE MEN YOU HAVE PUT TO *DEATH* --

MEN WHOSE LIVES YOU'VE PLAYED *GOD* WITH--

INNOCENT, LOYAL SUBJECTS, ALL OF THEM.

HERE'S THE *PROOF.*

IF *DOUBT* DOES *INDEED* CROSS YOUR MIND--

--I'M NOT SURPRISED.

YOU, WHERE HAVE *YOU* BEEN?

SEARCHING FOR A MAN WHO *COULD* HELP US IN THIS *DILEMMA.*

INDEED?

AND WHO IS THIS SAGE? FROM WHAT NAMELESS LAND AND TIMELESS TIME IN VIRTUAL REALITY HAVE YOU *DRAGGED* HIM?

I FOUND HIM WHERE I SHOULD HAVE LOOKED IN THE *FIRST* PLACE...

...LATVERIA.

HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A PRINCE OF THE ROYAL BLOOD OR SOMETHING. I NEVER *QUITE* GOT IT *STRAIGHT.*

YOU PUP!

YOU CALL YOURSELF *ROYALTY...*

...CLOAK YOURSELF IN YOUR MASTERY OF THE REALM OF THE MYSTIC... AND THE DIMENSIONS BEYOND!

I SAY THAT YOU ARE A *FOOL.*

YOU HAVE SURROUNDED YOURSELF WITH THE DEPOSED DESPOTS OF HISTORY... YOU HAVE MADE THEM YOUR MENTORS... AND THEY HAVE TAUGHT YOU *NOTHING.*

THEIR LESSON IS THIS... *NO ONE MAN* CAN HOLD DOMINION OVER *ALL.*

THIS MUST CEASE.

IF YOU CONTINUE TO SLAUGHTER THE INNOCENT... YOU WILL RULE OVER A DESERT OF DEAD BODIES...

...A WASTE-LAND OF CARNAGE AND RUIN...

YOU WILL ACHIEVE THE PERFECTION YOU SOUGHT ...THE WORLD WILL LIVE UP TO YOUR HIGH STANDARDS... BECAUSE THE ONLY MAN LEFT STANDING WILL BE YOU.

BUT I TELL YOU, NO MATTER HOW *GREAT* YOU ARE... YOU WILL *ALWAYS* MEET SOMEONE... WHOSE POWER IS FAR *GREATER!*

YOU CANNOT SPEAK TO ME *THUS.*

HERE, *MINE* IS THE *ULTIMATE WORD! THE ULTIMATE POWER!*

YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY I AM HERE, DO YOU?

DO YOU WISH TO SEE POWER?

BEHOLD!

THIS IS *MYSTIC POWER* BEYOND YOUR KEN!

YOUR ARMIES? GONE!

YOUR STRANGLE-HOLD ON THE WORLD'S RESOURCES? GONE!

YOUR CHANCE TO CONTROL THIS PLANET'S FUTURE? GONE, JUST AS QUICKLY!

MY MAGIC IS STRONGER. IT COMES FROM THE *WELL-SPRING* FROM WHICH YOURS FLOWS. BUT MINE IS TEMPERED WITH THE EXPERIENCE... AND WISDOM OF *AGE*.

IF YOU LIVE AS LONG AS I HAVE...YOU *MAY* SOMEDAY WIELD THE POWER THAT COULD HAVE BEEN YOURS...

...THE LEGACY OF YOUR GYPSY FOREBEARS... THE INHERITANCE YOU HAVE SQUANDERED.

PERHAPS NO ONE IN *YOUR* DISTANT TIME HAS EQUALLED YOUR SORCERY MELDED WITH SCIENCE...

...BUT THERE WAS A TIME THE "MASTERY" YOU DISPLAY WOULD SHAME A *NOVICE*... AND I AM FROM THAT TIME!

MY LORE HAS BEEN *FORGOTTEN*--

JUST AS MY LORE WILL FORCE *YOU* TO *FORGET* YOUR VISIT TO THE NEXUS OF ALL REALITIES... AND ALL THAT HAS TRANSPIRED HERE!

IT WILL BE AS IF YOU -- AND I -- HAD NEVER ARRIVED!

MY HEAD--

SOMETHING WRONG WITH MY HEAD...

WHOSE VOICE IS THAT?

WIRE! WHERE *ARE* WE?

I DOWNLOADED AND SURFED THROUGH SOME STRAY FILES FROM THIS ALCHEMAX WISE GUY JORDAN BOONE. WAS *HE* EVER THEIR GOLDEN BOY! HE GOT A PRACTICALLY *UNLIMITED* BUDGET TO WORK UP SOMETHING CALLED *VIRTUAL UNREALITY*.

PFAGH! I HAVE NO TIME FOR "UNREALITY"!

ONLY THE PRAGMATIC CONCERNS OF THE REAL WORLD MERIT MY ATTENTION!

WHAT COULD I POSSIBLY FIND HERE THAT WOULD BE WORTH MY TIME?

"Whenever kingship approaches tyranny it is near its end, for by this it becomes ripe for division..." —Nicholas of Oresme